



December 14, 2005

## Operation Royal Flush defendant is sentenced to more than 15 years for drug trafficking

A federal judge has sentenced **Juan Guerrero**, formerly of Providence, to 188 months in federal prison for engaging in a crack-trafficking conspiracy. Guerrero, 25, who is also known as "Pawtucket," was one of a dozen defendants charged federally as a result of Operation Royal Flush, a multi-agency investigation into drug trafficking by members and associates of the Almighty Latin King Nation.

The office of United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which Senior U.S. District Court Judge Ronald R. Lagueux imposed yesterday in U.S. District Court, Providence.

In September, Guerrero pleaded guilty to conspiring with **Joel Francisco** to distribute crack cocaine. At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen G. Dambruch said that the government could prove that, on August 31, 2004, Drug Enforcement Administration agents monitored discussions between Guerrero and Francisco about crack sales. Guerrero agreed to buy seven to ten grams of crack from Francisco, who is also known as "Joey Crack." Later that same day, agents observed Francisco hand a small object to Guerrero on a Providence street corner.

In November 2004, a federal grand jury indicted Guerrero, Francisco, and other Latin Kings and teams of federal agents and Providence Police arrested several of them. Guerrero fled Rhode Island but Deputy U.S. Marshals traced him to an address in Denver, Colorado, where

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Denver Police arrested him in February. A police SWAT team approached the house and, after Guerrero refused to come out, the team swarmed in and arrested him without incident.

Francisco, the primary subject of the Royal Flush investigation, was sentenced in September to life in federal prison. Ten other defendants seized in Operation Royal Flush have pleaded guilty to federal charges and have been sentenced to prison. One is awaiting sentencing. The Rhode Island Attorney General's Office is prosecuting additional Royal Flush defendants on state charges.

**Providence Police** and the **Drug Enforcement Administration** led the **Operation Royal Flush Task Force**, in coordination with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office. Six other federal, state, and municipal law enforcement agencies contributed resources: the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives**, the **Federal Bureau of Investigation**, the **Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement**, the **U.S. Marshals Service**, **Rhode Island State Police**, and **East Providence Police**.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Dambruch and Mary E. Rogers prosecuted the federal cases that resulted from the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie S. Browne represented the government at Guerrero's sentencing.

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